

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CASABL 02110 110814Z
ACTION STR-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 STRE-00 SP-02 ICA-11 AID-05
EB-08 NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
LAB-04 SIL-01 HA-05 IO-13 /107 W
-----040565 120712Z /21
R 101415Z AUG 78
FM AMCONSUL CASABLANCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5701

C O N F I D E N T I A L CASABLANCA 2110

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD
SUBJ: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON LABOR STANDARDS

REF: STATE 136706 AND STATE 194523

IN ANSWER TO PARA 3, A, B AND C

1. MOROCCO HAS COMPREHENSIVE LABOR CODE COVERING MINIMUM WAGE, SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS AT WORK SITES, AND EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN AND CHILD LABOR. EXCEPT FOR MINOR MODIFICATIONS, IT IS NEARLY A COPY OF EXISTING FRENCH LABOR LEGISLATION ON THE SUBJECT AND INCLUDES SAFETY PRECAUTION REQUIREMENTS WITH REGARD TO HANDLING OF ASBESTOS, BENZENE, LEAD, SILICA, TRI-CHLORETHYLENE, AND COTTON DUST.

2. SAFETY AND HEALTH STANDARDS AT WORK SITES CANNOT BE ENFORCED BECAUSE THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH LABOR INSPECTORS TO MONITOR ALL OF THE INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES. FOR CASABLANCA AND MOHAMMEDIA WHERE 80 PERCENT OF MOROCCO'S INDUSTRIAL CAPACITY IS LOCATED, (6,000 INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES) THERE ARE ONLY 34 LABOR INSPECTORS WITH ANOTHER 40 TO COVER THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. ABOUT ONE-HALF OF THE LABOR INSPECTORS REMAIN AT THE MINISTRY OF LABOR IN RABAT. ACCORDING TO A MINISTRY OF
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PAGE 02 CASABL 02110 110814Z

LABOR OFFICIAL WITH 23 YEARS EXPERIENCE IN THE LABOR FIELD, HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS ARE NOT ENFORCED AND THE USE OF CHILD LABOR (I.E., UNDER 12 YEARS OF AGE) IN THE HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY IS WIDESPREAD. HE OBSERVED THAT LAST YEAR A UNITED NATIONS INVESTIGATING TEAM HAD REPORTED THE EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN UNDER 12 IN SOME HANDICRAFT INDUSTRIES SUCH AS RUG-MAKING. AS A RESULT OF THIS UN REPORT, A SPECIAL EFFORT HAD

BEEN MOUNTED BY THE LABOR MINISTRY TO CRACK DOWN ON THE USE OF CHILDREN IN THESE INDUSTRIES BUT HE ADMITTED THAT THE PRACTICE STILL EXISTS.

3. IN AN EFFORT TO PROVIDE BETTER ADMINISTRATION OF THE LABOR CODE, THE GOVERNMENT OF MOROCCO IS ESTABLISHING IN RABAT A TRAINING SCHOOL FOR LABOR INSPECTORS TO RAISE THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE INSPECTORATE AS WELL AS TO TRAIN NEW INSPECTORS. IN THIS CONNECTION THE MINISTER OF LABOR OFFICIAL ESTIMATED THAT THE PRESENT INSPECTOR CORPS (ABOUT 150) WOULD HAVE TO BE TRIPLED IN ORDER TO ADEQUATELY MONITOR SAFETY AND HEALTH CONDITIONS IN THE FACTORIES. HE ALSO FELT THAT THE LABO INSPECTORS WOULD HAVE TO BE MORE SENSITIZED TO THIS PROBLEM "WHICH TENDED TO GET OVERLOOKED".

4. CONCERNING ENFORCEMENT OF THE MINIMUM WAGE, LABOR OFFICIAL SAID THAT IT WAS SO LOW (0.35 CENTS AN HOUR FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS AND \$1.80 PER DAY FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS) THAT ALL INDUSTRIES PAID THE MINIMUM WAGE. HOWEVER, HE SAID THAT IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY, FOR EXAMPLE, WHERE WORKERS WERE SOMETIMES PROGRAMMED FOR 12-HOUR SHIFTS, THEY WERE NOT PAID OVERTIME NOR NIGHT WAGES AS REQUIRED BY LAW. HE SAID THAT EMPLOYERS SOMETIMES FORCED WORKERS TO WORK A 10 OR EVEN 12-HOUR DAY EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE ONLY SUPPOSED TO WORK A SIX-DAY, 8-HOUR SHIFT.
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PAGE 03 CASABL 02110 110814Z

5. WITH REGARD TO PARAGRAPH D, POST IS UNAWARE OF ANY DIFFERENTIAL LABOR REGULATIONS OR STANDARDS IN THESE AREAS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LABOR, STANDARDS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978CASABL02110
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780330-0112
Format: TEL
From: CASABLANCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780879/aaaacobf.tel
Line Count: 98
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 98d55b65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION STR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 136706, 78 STATE 194523
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1781858
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON LABOR STANDARDS
TAGS: ETRD
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/98d55b65-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014